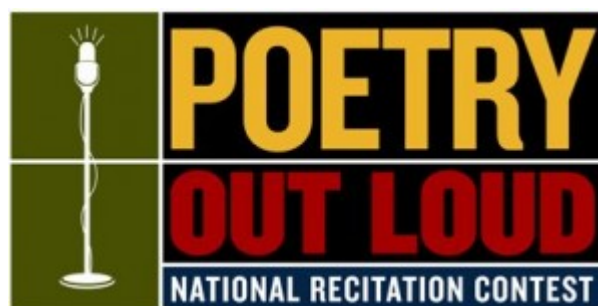


Sixteen High School Students Compete in 2014 Delaware Poetry Out Loud State Finals

Students from sixteen Delaware high schools will participate in the Poetry Out Loud state finals at the Smyrna Opera House on Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 7 p.m. The event is free and the public is invited to attend. Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn will greet contestants and give opening remarks.



The winner will receive \$200 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete in the national championship April 29-30, 2014 where \$50,000 in cash prizes and school stipends are awarded.

Each of the sixteen participants will recite poetry that they have selected, studied, and practiced, representing poets including Walt Whitman, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Gwendolyn Brooks. The recitations are inspiring, moving, animated, sometimes humorous, and always engaging. The 2014 participants are:

Sydney Badel, Caravel Academy
Kathleen Becker, Red Lion Christian Academy
Daria Chicosky, Padua Academy
Erin Paige Dugan, Dover High School
Joslyn Gardner, Wilmington Friends School
Genna Hahn, Mount Sophia Academy
Syda Isaacs, Brandywine High School

Janay Brooklyn Laws, First State School
Christopher Malafronti, Sanford School
Kellina Moore, Appoquinimink High School
Maryam Pasdar, Ursuline Academy
James Rath, Wilmington Christian School
Bridget Rocha, St. Mark's High School
Idalis Stamas, Polytech High School
Kana Turley, Tall Oaks Classical School
Kelly Velasquez-Perez, Seaford Senior High School

To learn more about the individual students and insights into their reasons for participating in the program, [read their biographies](#).

Liane Hansen, prominent American journalist and Emmy Award-winning radio personality of National Public Radio's (NPR) "Weekend Edition Sunday," will be the Mistress of Ceremonies. Adjudicators include The Honorable Donald A. Blakey, Linda Blaskey, Tina Betz, Jane Miller, Joseph Consiglio and Ginny Jewell. They bring their personal and professional experience as poets, educators, and performing artists, to judge the participants on physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, level of difficulty, evidence of understanding, overall performance, and accuracy.

The Delaware Division of the Arts sponsors the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest program in Delaware schools and the state finals. Competition begins at the classroom level in the fall and culminates with the state finals each spring. Twenty-one schools and 1,765 Delaware students participated in the Poetry Out Loud program in the current academic year.

The Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest competition is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. [Click here for more details about the partnership and program](#).